



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium supports President Obama's actions to protect public health and increase the quality of life in rural Alaska.**

**(Anchorage, Alaska) – September 2, 2015**

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) applauds President Obama's announcement that his administration has listened and responded to our recommendation to revise the USDA Rural Alaska Villages Grant (RAVG) Program regulations so that water and sanitation system conditions no longer need to be in an emergency state before assistance can be provided. This commonsense revision will allow RAVG program funds to be used more effectively and efficiently to meet the long-term water and sanitation needs of rural Alaskan communities. These threatened communities will no longer need to wait until disaster strikes before assistance is made available.

Construction of safe water and sanitation systems are critical to public health. Studies have shown that children living in rural Alaskan communities with limited access to water are five times more likely to be hospitalized for lower respiratory infection and eleven times more likely for pneumonia.

Andy Teuber, Chairman and President of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium summarized the significance of the announcement: "Today's action demonstrates the commitment of this administration in addressing important concerns of Alaska Native people and rural Alaskan communities. We look forward to continued partnership with the administration in meeting the unique challenges brought by climate change."

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**About the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium**

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is a not-for-profit Tribal health organization managed by Alaska Native Tribal governments and their regional health organizations. ANTHC provides statewide services in specialty medical care; construction of water, sanitation and health facilities; community health and research; telehealth and information technology.

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